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possible steadily to reduce the amount, as the second year goes on toward its close, until at its end the amount has been reduced almost to zero. And it need hardly be said that throughout these two years thoroughness should be the watchword, the amount of ground covered in reading being a minor consideration. This plan followed, not only a considerable amount of knowledge but of power should be gained in two years by the bright or average pupil. The dull pupil should not, in my opinion, usually study Latin at all. I think he can get more benefit, with less wear and tear, from a modern language. After the beginning of the third year in our four years Latin course composition should practically disappear, except as an incident or as a diversion. Read, interpret, and learn the language by reading should now be the motto. Thus we try to answer the question, Bread, or a Stone?

If it be true that composition should be thus limited, the kind is also to be considered. Some may ask how much proficiency in composition is to be expected, or should be gained. To ask the question shows the old confusion of thought of those who, while disclaiming that the writing of Latin is an end, yet propose to test the pupil's knowledge of Latin by his ability to write Latin. Still, something may be said on both these points: First, what is known as the writing of connected discourse has no place in the secondary school, except as an amusement, or as an exercise in practical logic. Secondly, the student who has gained a knowledge of syntax sufficient to enable him to write creditably short Latin sentences illustrating common grammatical principles, sentences of the grade of difficulty of those given in the elementary examination of the College Entrance Board, or of the Regents, has had all the composition he needs in the secondary course. Indeed, I am willing to go farther than this, and state my belief that the person who can pass one of these elementary examinations with a high mark, ninety-five or a hundred per cent, has done as much Latin composition as he needs to assist him in reading any Latin that was ever written, from Livius Andronicus to the latest treatise on philology composed by a German doctor. Understand me, I do not say that he has all the knowledge of syntax needed for such reading; but in order to teach a boy to spell 'horse', it is not necessary to send him out to curry the beast itself, and there are easier and better ways of learning syntax in the later stages of the process than by writing Latin.

Now what are the advantages gained by this removal of composition from the last two years? They are chiefly two, one negative, that the deadening effect of the distasteful composition lesson recurring once a week or oftener is removed; the other positive, that the time thus gained can be given to more inspiring, elevating, mind and heart expanding,

nobler things. I would not devote it all to reading; rather I should hope to find time and opportunity to give a wider knowledge of the life and the art, as well as the literature, of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. But suppose the time to be wholly devoted to extra reading. Easily from thirty to fifty per cent more could be read in the two years than could otherwise be done. I love Homer. So, I hope, does an occasional member of my classes. With my own Homer classes, in the forty or fifty lessons which we now have to devote to prose composition, it would be quite possible to add three full books or more of the Iliad or the Odyssey to the amount now read. And I do not doubt the far greater value of that extra amount of noble literature to the student. At Harvard College, as no doubt you all know, the examination in Advanced Greek Composition is optional for admission; that is, the candidate may enter with full credit for Greek, both Elementary and Advanced, six points, and pass no more composition than the elementary paper.

And now I will close with a brief anecdote (if anecdote it may be called), in which there is contained, perhaps, a prophecy. The present speaker chanced recently to be discussing this question of composition with a friend, in the presence of a lady, who is a skilled teacher of Greek and Latin. The speaker argued, as here, for little or no composition in the third and fourth years of the secondary course in Latin. His friend, on the other hand, since the majority of high school students leave school by the end of the second year, argued that the first two years especially should be chiefly cultural, with no room for composition there. The lady expressed herself as thoroughly convinced by both arguments. And indeed, if it can be successfully maintained that the first two years of the study of Latin can be made chiefly cultural, giving, without composition, knowledge of Latin and power to read it, it is obvious that the chief argument in favor of any composition falls to the ground. Hence, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that, in the not far distant future, we may see advocated a four years Latin course which shall contain, from *mensa* to the ivory gate, not a shred of composition.

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## REVIEWS

Lectures on Greek Poetry. By J. W. Mackail. London: Longmans, Green & Co. (1910). Pp. xvii+272.

The fine literary quality of these lectures is what we have learned to expect from the author of the Latin Literature, the Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology, and the Springs of Helicon. The interpretation of literature here strives to be itself literature, not philology or the philosophy of history.

This ambition too often betrays its votaries into tinsel ornament and crude rhetoric. But Mr. Mackail by temperament prefers, as he repeatedly tells us, "the low, clear note" and "the speech of one who may speak softly and need not raise his voice". His style, while generally Hellenic in its reserve and restraint, is informed here and there with that peculiar strain of sentiment or sentimentality which recent English scholarship has compounded out of Dante, William Morris, Rossetti, Swinburne, the middle ages, primitive anthropology, John Addington Symonds, and Wilamowitz. I am not certain that this style is a better vehicle of critical or philological truth than the good old fashioned Macaulayese which we Americans employ when our feelings are moved—but it is much more soothing to refined sensibilities.

Instead of composing another primer of Greek literature, Mr. Mackail wisely selects for fuller treatment the poets who appeal most strongly to himself, and whom he therefore naturally regards as typical representatives of the Greek spirit. Of Homer's fire, of the unapproachable luster of Sappho, placed beside which all other lyric styles pale to ashes; of the pure and tender art of Simonides; of Sophocles, "the single poet who embodies centrally and completely the spirit of Athens"; of Theocritus and Tennyson, of Apollonius of Rhodes and William Morris, he writes with penetrating insight and divinatory sympathy.

His brief introductory abatement of that intolerable nuisance and philological scandal, the Homeric question, may be commended to all historians of Greece or of Greek literature who waste their readers' time with that unprofitable scholasticism. His characterization of the genius and quality of Homeric poetry, though slight, is felicitous and true, and in the last ten pages of his second chapter he writes of Helen of Troy, the Divine Fire, the Wrath, the Homeric Background, Fire and Night, and the Splendor of Life, with an eloquence that Mr. Andrew Lang may envy and that recalls the great paragraph in Ruskin's *Mysteries of Life*. Too much space is given to Sappho. All criticism of Sappho is the endeavor to impart to those who do not read Greek an ecstasy which they cannot feel. For this, Swinburne suffices. Mr. Mackail rhapsodizes very prettily, but a paragraph of rhapsody will serve as well as twenty pages. The most noticeable feature of the book is the choice of Simonides rather than Pindar to represent the consummated lyric, and of Sophocles rather than Aeschylus as the embodiment of the genius of Greek tragedy. From the Hellenic and the historical point of view, Mr. Mackail justifies his selection with good and plausible reasons. Yet, when all is said, there is something paradoxical in a study of Greek poetry which practically ignores the two supreme poets of historical Greece. The

choice of Sophocles may be defended on the ground that though he is the lesser poet he is the more typical Athenian and the greater dramatist. But what would Professor Gildersleeve or Professor Wilamowitz say to Mr. Mackail's statement that "Pindar gives the feeling of being somewhat outside of Hellenic poetry?" The fact is that Mr. Mackail apparently does not understand Pindar, or is temperamentally incapable of appreciating him. He aches "in this whirl of sound for the *vox humana* or a phrase of the lovely flute-stop that goes straight to the heart". He tells us that "the impression he (Pindar) gives in the original (Italics mine) is of something grotesque and almost monstrous", and he finally informs the confiding English reader that the poetry of George Meredith has an "essentially Pindaric quality":

'With shudders chill as aconite  
The couchant chewer of the cud  
Will start at times in pussy fright  
Before the dogs, when reads her sprite  
The streaks predicting streams of blood'.

That is Pindar all over!—and that is what the successor of Matthew Arnold in the chair of poetry at Oxford has to tell us of him who ranks third with Plato and Aeschylus among the interpreters of the Greek spirit, of the inimitable master of "the grand style in simplicity", of the world's most magnificent and splendid poet, of the singer to whose orchestral harmonies all other verbal music is as a tiny tinkling of the bells and a harsh fretting of the strings—

"Son of the lightning, fair and fiery star,  
Strong-winged, imperial Pindar, voice divine".

I cordially concur with Mr. Mackail's admiration for the purity and seeming simplicity of Simonides's poetry at its best. But that exquisite art, in the extant fragments at least, is of a totally different and lower order from the supreme gifts of imagination and song in which Pindar and Aeschylus stand alone. It is rhetoric in the good sense in which the word applies to much, though not all, of the poetry of Tennyson—at its best the rhetoric of artistic yet conscious simplicity, at the worst verging on the rhetoric of antithesis and conceit. The failure to feel this has in one case, I think, confused Mr. Mackail's usually sure literary tact. As I am not quite certain of the point, I will make the reader the judge. Mr. Mackail quotes the famous 'ὦ ξείν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις, as the consummate example of the severe simplicity of Simonides's manner when dealing greatly with great things. I think that there is a touch of Victor Hugo, of epigram in the modern sense, even here. If so, it is very slight, and I will not insist upon it. But Mr. Mackail brackets with this epigram as of the same quality the lines

Κρῆς γενεάν Βρόταχος Γορτύνης ἐνθάδε κείμει  
οὐ κατὰ τοῦτ' ἔλθων, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐμπορίαν,

"I, Brotachus, of Gortyna, a Cretan, lie here, not having come hither for this, but for merchandise". He adds the comment "prose could not be simpler, quieter, more precise. We seem to hear Nature herself speaking, as one who does not need to raise her voice". To my feeling, this epigram, whether by Simonides or another, is a conceit, a pun, not on a word, but on an idiomatic phrase, which, not to put it profanely, may be remotely illustrated by the modern quip "How did you *come* to fall into the water? I didn't *come* to fall in; he pushed me".

The apology for, or rather eulogy of, Sophocles is admirable and well worth reading even after Fitzgerald, Jebb, Butcher, and Warren. Sympathy is the best interpreter, and with the serene and gracious art of Sophocles Mr. Mackail's own temperament and talent are in complete accord. Aeschylus, I fancy, would trouble him and put him out, and I should be curious to know his real opinion of Marlowe and the note of Marlowe in Shakespeare. Excellent too are the chapters on Theocritus and Apollonius of Rhodes, though the literary parallels are sometimes fanciful. The twelfth idyll is not really like Tennyson's "Tears, idle tears", and it can hardly resemble "Tears, idle tears" and Shakespeare's Sonnets at the same time. The idea that William Morris is greatly superior to Apollonius is the fond illusion of William Morris's biographer.

The fashion of present day criticism receives work of the high excellence of these lectures with un-mixed praise. But charm and distinction are not all that we demand even in the literary interpretation of the Classics. False points and the misinterpretation of text are as much to be deprecated when they serve for literary effect as they are when used in support of a "geistreiche Combination". Mr. Mackail's saying that "tests must be applied to criticism as much as to the things criticised" holds of his own literary criticism as well as of the philological criticism of which he is speaking. Of too many of his eloquent paragraphs and seemingly illuminating suggestions we may repeat what Arnold says of similar things in Ruskin: "The reader may feel moved as he reads it, but it is none the less an example of *"le faux"* in criticism—it is false". On page 50, contrasting Hesiod with Homer, he says "The heroes of Thebes and Troy perished in 'wicked war', no longer spoken of in the epic phrase as man-ennobling". The Hesiodic expression, incorrectly translated "wicked war", is a tag from the Iliad. Homer does not normally apply the epithet "man-ennobling" to war, but to battle. Practically all his epithets of war are lugubrious. The suggestion attributed to Menelaus on page 53 "of a tour through the country with a view of picking up some portable property in each town they visited" completely mis-

represents the fair epic meaning of Odyssey 15.77-85, which refers to gifts of guest friendship received from social equals, not to tribute levied on the populace. The argument on page 76 that the image in Iliad 16.297-300 is of a landscape suddenly revealed in a lightning flash rather than by the blowing away of clouds is a tissue of misinterpretation and mistranslation. The words will not bear the translation given. *Κινήση* cannot mean "pierces". "That moment's awful pause" is not "illuminated by the image". Seventeen lines of fighting intervene between the "thrill of horror" that "runs through the whole Trojan ranks" and the simile. And "the breathing space" which the simile illustrates is not the "awful pause" before the Trojans retreat, but the slight respite obtained by the Greeks as a result of that partial retreat. No beauty of diction and no quotations from Ruskin can redeem this sort of inaccuracy. The reader may be moved, but it is false. The point of the simile is the comparison of the *little* breathing space to the *little* cloud rift that reveals the heights and the heavens. Matthew Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum often illustrates and exaggerates this form of simile. On page 95 Ovid's

concinet Ismarium Daulias ales Ityn, ales Ityn

is not a case of "that reduplication of phrase which was a distinctive note in Sappho's style". It is a case of epianalepsis at the end and beginning of hexameter lines which goes back to Homer. The repetition *Ityn, Ityn* is a commonplace in tragedy. Pindar did not say "Westward beyond Cadiz no man may pass" in "his haughty claim to have consummated the lyric". He uses the image repeatedly, but never, I think, in exaltation of his own poetry, and Mr. Mackail uses it here merely that he himself may pass on and out to the "Atlantic", with which he wishes to compare Aeschylus. The statement (page 167) that Theseus (O. C. 565) declares "that, since he has no power over the morrow, he will do justice and love mercy today" introduces, I think, a modern touch not in the Greek, perhaps suggested to Mr. Mackail by the preface to Ruskin's Crown of Wild Olive. Theseus's real thought is best illustrated by Isocrates 1.29 *μηδενὶ συμφορὰν ἀνέδωκεν*. *Κοινὴ γὰρ ἡ τύχη καὶ τὸ μέλλον ἀόρατον*.

I trust that these minor rectifications will not be regarded as the carping of impotent pedantry against the higher order of artistic work which as we are often uncharitably reminded American scholars do not produce. Jebb's lectures on Classical Greek Poetry also make their appeal to the educated layman of cultivated literary taste, but they contain nothing that will mislead him. Charm, distinction, and literary interest are compatible with the most scrupulous observation of scholarly precision, as Mr. Mackail would have shown us again—if he had revised these lectures more carefully before publication.

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